The *Atheist's* Objections,

Against the

IMMATERIAL NATURE of GOD,

AND

INCORPOREAL SUBSTANCES, Refuted.

In Two

SERMONS

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*,

April 4th. and *May* 2d. 1698.

BEING THE

Fourth and Fifth of the LECTURE for that Year,

Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A.

and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,

Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin*, at the *King's-Head* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, 1698.

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JOHN iv. 24.

God is a Spirit ——

THE Occaſion of theſe words was this: Our Bleſſed Lord, in his way into *Galilee*, paſſed through *Sychar*, a City of *Samaria*, near to which was the famous Well of the Patriarch *Jacob*. To this Well our Saviour went to refreſh himſelf on his Journey; and as he always made it his buſineſs to be doing Good, took occaſion from a Woman's coming to draw Water, to diſcourſe with her about the Buſineſs of his Miſſion. By way of Introduction to which, He firſt gives her ſome Proofs of his being endowed with a Super-natural Knowledge. From whence ſhe juſtly concluding Him to be a Prophet, or a Perſon enrich'd with Divine and Extraordinary Gifts and Qualifications; ſhe ask'd Him concerning one great Point that had been long in diſpute between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*, (*i. e.*) about the true Place for Religious Worſhip. The *Jews* rightly aſſerted *Jeruſalem* to be *the Place where Men ought to Worſhip*. The *Samaritans* contended, that it ought to be with them, at *Shiloh*, in *Mount Ephraim*, where the Ark and Tabernacle were placed long before the building of the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and where alſo the Patriarchs, before the Law, did uſe to ſacrifice to, and worſhip God. They pretended alſo to be the true Succeſſors of *Jacob*, and of the Ancient Patriarchs,

and conſequently, that their Place of Worſhip had the greateſt Support from Antiquity. This Pretence was an Umbrage to that Temple that they ſet up in *Mount Gerizim* (in the time of *Darius*) in oppoſition to that at *Jeruſalem*, (*a*) and which they ſuppoſed to give an Holineſs to that Mountain, even after the Temple was deſtroyed. And the *Samaritan* Verſion of the *Pentateuch* hath plainly falſified the Text of *Moſes*, in *Deut.* xxvii. 4. by ſubſtituting *Mount Gerizim* inſtead of *Mount Ebal*, in order to gain ſome Honour to this Celebrated Place. But notwithſtanding all theſe mighty Pretenſions, the *Samaritans* were perfectly in the wrong. The Ancient Pedigree that they boaſted ſo much of, was wholly falſe and precarious. For they were, in reality, only the Succeſſors of ſome *Aſſyrians*, who were planted in the Cities of *Samaria* by *Salmaneſer*, when he carry'd the Tribe of *Ephraim* Captive into *Aſſyria*; as you may read at large, 2 *King.* xxvi. 24.

(*a*) *Joſeph. Antiquit.* l. 11. c. 8.

This therefore being the true State of the Caſe between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*; our Saviour's Anſwer to the Woman was, That the *Jews* were in the right, becauſe they worſhipped the True God, and that too in ſuch a manner as was agreeable to that Revelation God had given them of his Will: *We know what we worſhip* —— But the *Samaritans* were doubly miſtaken, both as to the Object, and as to the Place of their Worſhip. They, He tells her, *worſhipped they knew not what.* In which, it ſeems probable, that he may allude to what is ſaid of their Anceſtors the *Aſſyrians* in the Place before mentioned, 2 *King.* xvii. 26. (*viz.*) That *they worſhipped the God of the Land.* That is, They blindly paid their

their Devotion to the God of their New Country, without having any true and real Knowledge of him: But along with him, they worſhipped their own *Aſſyrian* Deities too; ſuch as *Succoth-Benoth*, *Aſhima-Nergal*, and the like. Our Saviour tells this Woman alſo, That a Time of Reformation was now at hand, when the Worſhip of God ſhould not be confined either to *Jeruſalem*, or *Mount Gerizim*; and that a more pure and Spiritual manner of Worſhip ſhould be eſtabliſhed; one that was not embarraſs'd with ſo vaſt a number of External Rites and Ceremonies, but one more ſuitable to the Nature of God, and to the Improved Sentiments of Mankind: for *God*, ſaith he, *is a Spirit*; and *they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* This ſeems to be the Occaſion and Connexion of theſe words: which having briefly ſhewed you, I proceed now to ſpeak to the words themſelves, *God is a Spirit.*

By which Terms, *God* and *Spirit*, thus connected together, we underſtand an Infinite Being, moſt Wiſe and Powerful, containing in Himſelf all poſſible Perfection, without being ſubject to any of thoſe Defects and Limitations which we plainly diſcover in Material Beings. And after this manner the Holy Scriptures do deſcribe God Almighty to us; they attribute ſuch Perfections and Qualifications to Him, as we can have no poſſible Idea of, as belonging to Matter.

Body or *Matter* is a Sluggiſh, Inſenſible, Paſſive and Unintelligent Thing, not poſſibly able to move of it ſelf, or to act or perform any thing by its own Power; but all the Motion and Activity that it hath, comes to it by Communication from ſomething that is without it, or diſtinct from it. But *all Power, both in Heaven and Earth,*

Earth, is the Lords: In his Hands are Power and Might; with Him is Wiſdom and Strength, he hath Counſel and Underſtanding. He made all Things; He ſtretcheth forth the Heavens alone, and ſpreadeth abroad the Earth by himſelf. There is none like to Him, who created and maintaineth all things, and in whom all Things Live, and Move, and have their Being (*a*).

(*a*) 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12. Job 12. 9, &c. Iſa. 44. 24, &c. Acts 17. 24, 25, &c.

The *Form* and *Faſhion* of all Material Things, we ſee, is continually flitting and changing, and there is nothing among them of any conſtant and laſting duration. But God is *Immutable* and *Eternal*, the ſame *Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever; He was, and is, and is to come*, and *with him is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of Turning* (*b*).

(*b*) Rev. 4. 8. Jam. 1. 17. Deut. 33. 27.

Material Beings are all *limited and imperfect* as to their *Extent*. The Place they are in confines and circumſcribes them; Nothing elſe can be there with them, nor they themſelves any where elſe. *But the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God*, which yet he more than fills with his Preſence: *which Preſence no one can flee or hide himſelf from: He is the ſearcher even of our hearts, and knoweth the moſt ſecret thoughts of Men.* There is *no Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight, but all things are Naked and open before him* (*c*). This and ſuch like is the Account that the Sacred Scripture gives of God, which is plainly Inconſiſtent with his being *Material* or *Corporeal*: and therefore it calls him in the words of my Text *a Spirit*, a Divine, moſt Excellent and Perfect Being, that diſcovers himſelf to our Reaſon and Underſtanding, but cannot poſſibly do ſo to our Senſes; *for him no Eye hath ſeen nor can ſee; he is Inviſible, he is a Spirit.*

(*c*) 2 Chron. 6. 18. Jer. 23. 24. Jer. 17. 10. & 20. 12.

But

But here the Atheiſt thinks he hath a ſufficient Ground for inſuperable Objections; Here his Philoſophy is called in to his Aſſiſtance; and by the Strength of that, he will undertake to maintain, that there is not, nor cannot be any ſuch thing as *a Spirit*, (i. e.) Any *Incorporeal* or *Immaterial* Being or *Subſtance*. And therefore ſince the Sacred Scripture and Divines do deſcribe the Deity after this abſurd and impoſſible manner, 'tis a good Argument (ſay they) that there is no ſuch Being at all: For when Men pretend to Deſcribe God after ſuch a manner as is Nonſenſical, Unintelligible and Impoſſible, (and yet ſay, that theirs is the only right way of Speaking of him): When Men attribute ſuch a manner of Exiſtence to him, as we know is contradictory to the Nature of Things; we have then juſt Ground to disbelieve all that they advance, in defence of ſo ridiculous and abſurd a Notion, and conſequently to conclude that there is no God at all. And hence we ſee theſe Men raiſe another Great Objection againſt the Being of a God, *viz.* That his Nature is ſo Deſcribed as to be *Unintelligible* and *Nonſenſe*. Which I ſhall now therefore endeavour to Refute.

And in Order to ſhew the Groundleſneſs and Invalidity of this Objection, I ſhall in purſuance of my former Method:

I. Give you the ſenſe of the Modern and Ancient Atheiſts on this Point. And then,

II. Endeavour to Refute what they Advance, and ſhew how Unreaſonable it is to build Atheiſm and Infidelity on ſo weak and invalid a Foundation. And,

1. I shall give you the Modern and Ancient Atheists Sense on this Point.

Mr. *Hobbs*, that lofty Pretender to Philosophy, declares that to say there is any *Immaterial Substance*, is not so much an *Error*, as it is *Nonsense*; *'tis using an Insignificant word, whereby we conceive nothing but the Sound* (*a*). And in his *Kingdom of Darkness*, where he undertakes to correct the University Learning, he is very Angry with *Aristotle*'s Metaphysicks, because it brought in, as he saith (tho' falsly, as I shall prove hereafter) the Doctrine or Notion of *Separated Essences*, and also of *Immateriality* and *Incorporeity*; for what is not *Corporeal*, he saith, *is Nothing*, and consequently *no where*. And this he undertakes to prove from a Passage which he seems to have borrowed from *Ocellus Lucanus*, tho' without naming him; and which, tho' it be a poor Sophism, and much worse than those he is condemning; yet he boldly lays it down as a Demonstration. *The Universe*, saith he, *is Corporeal, that is to say Body, and hath the Dimensions of Magnitude, namely, length, breadth, and depth; also every Part of Body is Body; and consequently every Part of the Universe is Body, and that which is not Body is no Part of the Universe. And because the Universe is all, that which is no Part of the Universe is Nothing, and consequently no where* (*b*). In another place he saith, *That no Man can conceive any thing but he must conceive it in some place, of some Determinate Magnitude, and as that which may be divided into Parts* (*c*). And again, p. 17. and 207. he tells us, *That an Incorporeal Substance is a Contradictory and Inconsistent Name; 'tis all one as if a Man should say, an Incorporeal Body; which words*

(*a*) *Leviath.* p. 15.

(*b*) *Leviath.* p. 371. 207.

(*c*) *Leviath.* p. 11.

words when they are joined together, do deſtroy one another; and therefore Body and Subſtance are all one (*a*). Elſewhere he tells us, That *the proper Signification of the word Spirit in common ſpeech, is either a ſubtile, fluid and inviſible Body, or elſe a Ghoſt or other Idle Phantaſm of our Imagination* (*b*), and a little after he aſſerts, *that to Men that underſtand the meaning of the words Subſtance and Incorporeal, they imply a Contradiction; and that to ſay an Angel or Spirit is an Incorporeal Subſtance, is to ſay in effect there is no Angel nor Spirit* (*c*). And this Notion he defends in his Anſwer to Biſhop *Bramhall's* Book written againſt his *Leviathan*; and perſeveres in aſſerting *that God himſelf is a Moſt Pure ſimple and corporeal Spirit*; and he defines a Spirit in General to be a *thin, fluid, tranſparent and inviſible Body* (*d*). Thus alſo *Spinoza*, in his *Opera Poſthuma*, p. 13. determines *Extended Subſtance* (that is *Body*) to be one of the Infinite Attributes of the Deity, and this he undertakes to demonſtrate from hence; that there is not (as he ſaith) any Other Subſtance but God; and who conſequently is a *Corporeal*, as well as a *Cogitative* Being. *Deus eſt res extenſa* (*e*). This, you perceive, is the plain ſenſe of theſe Writers, That there is no other *Subſtance* but *Body*; and conſequently to talk of a Spirit or an Incorporeal Subſtance, is to them perfect Nonſenſe and Contradiction. But tho' this be their Opinion and Aſſertion, yet they did not Invent it, nor firſt find it out: they are as far from being Originals in this, as in other things; for herein they do but Copy the Sentiments of the Ancient Atheiſts, and tread exactly in their Steps. That there was nothing but Body in the World, was long ago the Aſſertion

(*a*) *Leviath.* p. 17. 207.

(*b*) *Leviath.* p. 208.

(*c*) *Leviath.* p. 214.

(*d*) Anſwer to Biſhop *Bramhall*, p. 31, 36.

(*e*) *Ethices Pars* 2. *Prop.* 2. p. 42.

of such unthinking Men as our Modern Atheists are. *Plato* tells us, *That there were some in his Time, who asserted nothing to be Substance but what they could feel, and which would resist their Touch: and these Men affirmed Body and Substance to be the same thing; and what they were not able to lay hold of, and to grasp with their Hands, they said was really nothing at all. And if any one happened to talk with them about any thing that was not Body, they would ridicule and despise him, and not hear a word more that he should say* (*b*).

(*a*) Διϊσχυρίζονται τοῦτο εἶναι μόνον ὃ παρέχει προσβολὴν, καὶ ἐπαφὴν τινὰ, ταὐτὸν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὁριζόμενοι.—ἂν πᾶν ὃ μὴ δυνατοὶ ταῖς χερσὶ συμπιέζειν εἰσὶν, ὡς ἀρὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν ἐστὶ.—τῶν δ' ἄλλων εἴτις φησὶ μὴ σῶμα ἔχον εἶναι, καταφρονοῦντες τὸ παράπαν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐθέλοντες ἄλλο ἀκούειν. Sophist. p. 172. Ficin.

Aristotle acquaints us, That just such were the Atheistical Principles of his Contemporaries. *They affirm* (saith he) *Matter or Body to be the only Substance, and that all other things are only Passions and Affections of it.* And in another place, he saith, that these Men asserted *all things to be one; That there is but one Nature only, which is the Matter of all Things, and this is Corporeal, and hath magnitude* (*b*). And this was long before the Opinion also of *Leucippus* and *Democritus*.

(*b*) τοῦτο καὶ τοσαύτην φάσιν εἶναι τὴν ἅπασαν οὐσίαν, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα πάθη τούτων.—Ἓν τὸ πᾶν, καὶ μίαν εἶναι τινα φύσιν, ὡς ὕλην τιθέασι καὶ ταύτην σωματικὴν καὶ μέγεθος ἔχουσαν. Metaph. l. 1. c. 7.

Epicurus argues against *Plato*, that *there can be no Incorporeal Deity; not only because no Man can frame a conception of an Incorporeal Substance, but also because whatever is Incorporeal, must needs want Sense, and Prudence and Pleasure; all which things are included in the Notion of God: And therefore an Incorporeal Deity*, saith he, *is a Contradiction* (*c*). And his Followers, as appears by *Lucretius*, continued in the same

(*c*) Dr. *Cudw.* Intel, Syst. p. 20.

ſame Opinion, that there is no other Subſtance in Nature but Body (*a*); and they had no Notion of any Incorporeal thing, but their Vacuum or Empty ſpace, which was really nothing at all.

(*a*) *Præterea nihil eſt quod poſſis dicere ab omni Corpore ſejunctum*, &c. Lib. 1. v. 431.

Sextus Empiricus tells us, that all the *Epicureans*, and ſome of the Stoicks, as *Baſileides* in particular, maintained μηδὲν εἶναι ἀσώματον, *that there was nothing Incorporeal or Immaterial* (*b*). By theſe Teſtimonies we ſee plainly, that the Modern Atheiſts tranſcribe the Ancient Opinions exactly, and have been able to add very little to them. And the Notion that Mr. *Hobbs* ſeems ſo fond of, and which he would fain ſet up as his own Diſcovery, That a Spirit is nothing *but a Thin fluid and tranſparent Body:* ſeems to me to be plainly taken from the σῶμα λεπτόμερες, which *Ariſtotle* tells us, was the Definition that ſome then gave of *a Spirit*, or the Soul of Man.

(*b*) Adv. Math. p. 257.

And thus having truly ſtated the Caſe, and ſhewed you what the Sentiments of the Ancient and Modern Atheiſts were and are, as to the Matter before us. I ſhall now proceed to Examine by what Reaſons and Arguments they endeavour to ſupport their Aſſertion, That there is no ſuch thing as any *Incorporeal Subſtance*, but that whatever really is, *is Body*. And here I find their main and chief Argument to be This; that an Immaterial Subſtance is an *Unconceivable Thing:* 'Tis what no Man can poſſibly have any notion or conception of; 'tis a perfect contradiction in Terms, and conſequently Nonſenſe and Impoſſible. This is every where almoſt the Language of Mr. *Hobbs*, as I have before obſerved. He alſo pretends to diſcover the τὸ ἄπιον τῶν ψευδῶς, the true Cauſe of this Fiction about Immaterial Subſtances. The Notion,

he tells us, took its rise from the Abuse of abstracted Words, and such-like Metaphysical and Scholastical Terms, which some have fansied as real Entities separated and distinct from the Subject, or Matter, of which they are Attributes or Qualities only. Thus for Instance, *because we can consider Thinking or a Reasoning Power alone by it self, and distinct from Body; therefore some have been so foolish as to conclude that it is not the Action or Accident of that Body in which it is, but a real Substance by it self. And 'tis upon this Account, that* (a) *when a Man is dead and buried, they will say, his Soul (that is, his Life) can walk separated from the Body, and is seen by Night among the Graves*, whereas Life is only *a Name of Nothing*, (b) and the *Soul or Mind of Man is in reality Nothing else but the result of Motion in the Organical Parts of his Body* (c). 'Tis like the forms and qualities of Other things, depending purely on the Mechanism, Modification, and Motion of the Parts of Matter, according as it happens to be variously disposed, figured and agitated; and consequently it can be nothing at all distinct from that Body whose Form or Quality it is. And this Soul or Mind, or any other Faculty or Quality in Man, coming once to be conceived as a thing distinct from the Body, and being Invisible and Insensible, hath been called by such Names as we use to give to fine Subtile and aereal Bodies. Such as πνεῦμα, *Spiritus*, and the like: which do properly signifie the *Wind*, or, which is near akin to it, the *Breath* of Man (d). And so Mr. *Hobbs* tells us, that in order to express our greater honour of God, the name of Spirit hath been given to him likewise, as better expressing to vulgar Apprehensions his fine aereal

(a) *Leviath.* p. 373.

(b) p. 372.

(c) *Leviath.* p. 190. & De Cive C. 15. §. 14. And in another place, he saith, *Mens nihil aliud est præterquam motus in quibusdam partibus corporis Organici.*

(d) *Leviath.* p. 207, 208.

aereal and Subtile Nature, than the groſſer word of Body. But however, *Philoſophers* and *Men of ſenſe* muſt take care, and not be impoſed upon by inſignificant words, ſo far as to imagine there can in reality be any ſuch thing as an *Incorporeal Subſtance*: for that is, when throughly conſidered, an abſolute *Contradiction and Nonſenſe*. 'Tis nothing *but an empty Name*, with which ſome poor Wretches are frighted, as the Birds are *from the Corn by an empty Doublet, a Hat and a Crooked Stick* (*e*); as he is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf. And this is the ſumm of what this mighty Philoſopher advances againſt Immaterial Subſtances. *Spinoza* is the only Man beſides, which I have met with, that aims at diſproving the Exiſtence of Incorporeal Beings: Which in his *Opera poſthuma* he pretends demonſtratively to do. But his chief and indeed only Argument is this (as I hinted before) that there is but *one only Subſtance* in the World, and That is God. *Matter* or *Body* he aſſerts to be one of the Attributes of this Subſtance, or the Mode by which God is conſidered as *Res extenſa*; from whence he concludes, that there can be no Subſtance but what is corporeal, becauſe Body is an Eſſential Property of his *one only Subſtance*, the Divine Nature. The Precarioufneſs of which Obſcure and Metaphyſical way of Arguing, I ſhall plainly ſhew below.

(*e*) *Leviath.* P. 373.

And, Thus having given you the ſum, of what theſe Writers advance againſt the Doctrine of Incorporeal Subſtances, I ſhall next proceed to Refute it, and to ſhew you how weak and inconcluſive their Arguments and Objections are. In order to which, I ſay, In the Firſt place,

1. That 'tis a very precarious and groundleſs way of

of arguing, to deny the Exiſtence of any thing only from our particular Apprehenſions and Conceptions not being able to maſter it. For it will not in the leaſt follow, that there can be no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Subſtance or a Spirit, becauſe *ſome few Men* pretend that they cannot conceive how any ſuch thing can poſſibly be. And I have already ſhewed, (*a*) that we have very juſt reaſon to allow the truth of, and to be ſatisfied of the Exiſtence of many things, whoſe Nature neither we, nor perhaps any one elſe, can fully Underſtand and Comprehend. Theſe Gentlemen pretend that they cannot conceive or have any Idea of an *Incorporeal Subſtance*. But yet they think, I ſuppoſe, that they have a clear Idæa and Conception of Body. Tho' ſhould you put them to deſcribe it, they would be very much at a loſs. For as one hath well obſerved, (*Mr.* Lock *in his Eſſay of* Humane Underſtanding, *Book* 2. *c.* 23.) if we carefully examine our Idea of Subſtance, we ſhall find that it is a kind of *complex one*, conſiſting as it were of ſeveral Idea's coexiſting together: which becauſe we are apt to conceive as one thing, we give it the General Name of *Subſtance*: as imagining that word to expreſs ſomething, tho' in reality we know not what, which is the *ſupport* of theſe Accidents or Qualities which occaſion the Idea's we have in our Minds of it. Let us therefore take any corporeal Subſtance, as ſuppoſe Gold; and inquire in our Mind what is that *Support*, *Subſtratum* or *Subſtance*, in which the Accidents of *Tellowneſs*, *great Specifick Weight*, and *ſtrange Ductility under the Hammer* do inhere; all which concurr to give us that complex Idea which we have of Gold; Shall we not find our ſelves

(*a*) See my Second Sermon.

ſelves put to it how to conceive, or to have a clear Idea of this? If we ſhould ſay that the ſubject of theſe Properties are the ſolid extended Parts; we ſhall not be much the nearer Satisfaction: for our Mind will be inquiſitive agen what is the Support or Subject of that *Extenſion* and *Impenetrability*. We may ſay, indeed, that 'tis the Subſtance it ſelf: which is a word that we uſe, and implies ſomething or other that is the Support of theſe Properties, but what that is, we have, I think, no clear and certain Idea. When yet we have clear and diſtinct Conceptions enough of theſe Properties which we find in this Body, and from whence we pronounce it to be Gold. So if on the other hand we take any Incorporeal Subſtance, as ſuppoſe the *Mind* or *Soul of Man*; and enquire what is the true Support of that *Self-moving Power*, that *Reaſoning* and *Cogitative* Faculty, and that *Liberty* or Freedom of Action which we plainly perceive to be inherent in it: we ſhall indeed be at a loſs, but yet no more than we were before in reference to Gold. For as from conſidering the Properties peculiar to that Body, we were ſatisfied that they muſt be inherent in *ſomething*, tho' *how* or in *what*, we have no clear Idea; ſo when we conſider *Life*, *Cogitation* and *Spontaneous Motion* in our Soul, we know very well that thoſe *more real* Properties muſt have ſomething alſo for their Support, or ſome Subſtance to inhere in: tho' what that is, and the peculiar manner of this we are wholly ignorant of. But then we have as juſt reaſon to believe that this Subſtance is real, as that the Subſtance of Gold is ſo. For Cogitation, Life, and Spontaneous Action, are Properties undoubtedly of as real a Nature

ture as *great Extenſive Weight*, *Yellowneſs* and *Ductility* can poſſibly be. And as we cannot but conclude both theſe to be real Subſtances, ſo we cannot alſo but conceive them as Natures abſolutely diſtinct and different from each other, and which can have no neceſſary dependance upon and relation to each other: for we can never imagine that Gold can be ever brought to *think*, *reaſon* or *move* it ſelf *ſpontaneouſly*, any more than we can conceive a Soul or Mind to be *yellow*, *heavy* or *ductile*. That is, we have quite different Idea's of each of them, and which nothing but wilful or long habituated Ignorance can ever make us confound together. And thus it appears to me that we may have as clear an Idea of Incorporeal Subſtance, as we have of Body; and that the former is no more unconceivable than the latter. And therefore 'tis as abſurd to argue againſt the Exiſtence of a Spirit, only from our not having any clear Idea of the Subſtance of a Spirit; as it would be to ſay there is no ſuch thing as Body, becauſe we don't know exactly what the Subſtance of Body is: which I dare ſay no Man can affirm that he doth. 'Tis very poſſible that Men may be ſo blinded and prejudiced by falſe Principles, ſo ſtupified by Ignorance, Idleneſs or Vice, and ſo engaged and enſlaved to a peculiar ſett of Notions, which advance and ſupport that way of acting and proceeding which they take delight in, that a great many things may appear Unconceivable and Impoſſible to them, which ſhall be far from being ſo to others, whoſe Minds are free, and more enured to thinking. Should you tell a Man, who is a Stranger to Geometry and Aſtronomy, of the many admirable and ſurprizing Truths

that

that can certainly be demonſtrated from the Principles of thoſe Noble Sciences, he would boldly pronounce them Impoſſible; and all your Diſcourſe and Proof (ſhould you attempt any ſuch thing) would to ſuch a Perſon be Nonſenſe, and your words meer empty and inſignificant Sounds. And there are many Perſons in the World, on whom the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt Method of Reaſoning that ever was, will make no manner of impreſſion at all, becauſe their Minds are not at all enured to a cloſe way of Arguing and Thinking. And truly the Atheiſtical Writers do diſcover ſo poor a Knowledge in Philoſophy, and ſo very little acquaintance with true Reaſoning and Science; that 'tis no wonder at all that they ſhould not be able to conceive and comprehend a great many things which others are very well ſatisfied with. *I know very well,* ſaith the Ingenious Perſon before cited, *that People whoſe Thoughts are immerſed in Matter, and who have ſo ſubjected their Minds to their Senſes, that they ſeldom reflect on any thing beyond them, are apt to ſay they cannot comprehend a thinking thing; which perhaps is true,* &c. And therefore ſuch a Philoſopher as Mr. *Hobbs,* that defines *Knowledge to be Senſe*; and ſaith, that *the Mind of Man is nothing but Motion in the Organical Parts of his Body,* may eaſily be infatuated ſo far as to aſſert that there is *no other Subſtance but Body,* and that a Spirit or Incorporeal Being, is a Nonſenſical, Contradictory and Impoſſible Notion. While Others, who can raiſe their Minds a little higher, and who can penetrate farther into things, will be fully ſatisfied that ſuch *Philoſophy* is *Nonſenſe* and *Impoſſibility.* As indeed ſome Perſons, in all Ages of the World, of which we have any Account, have ever been. For,

Eſſay of *Human Underſtanding*, p. 143.

2. Which is another very good Ground, from whence to refute this abſurd Opinion that there is no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Being: I ſay, there have been always many Perſons in the World, that have firmly believed and embraced the Doctrine of Immaterial Subſtances, and who have alſo aſſerted the Deity to be of that Nature. And this will Undeniably refute the two great Points of Mr. *Hobbs* his Opinion. For, if it be proved plainly that there hath been all along a received Belief and Opinion that there are Immaterial Subſtances, and that God himſelf is ſuch an One: it is then moſt clear and certain, that the Notion is neither inconceivable, contradictory, nor nonſenſe: and alſo that it did not take its Riſe and Original only from the Abuſe of the Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*. Not the *former*; for what is in its own Nature *unconceivable, nonſenſical* and *abſurd*, could never ſure gain an Admittance into the Belief of ſo many great Men, as we ſhall ſee preſently this Opinion did. *Not the latter*; for what was commonly received in the World before the time of *Ariſtotle*, could never be derived only from his and the Schoolmen's Philoſophy, as Mr. *Hobbs* is pleaſed to ſay this Belief of Immaterial Subſtances was. And that there was always in the World, a Notion and Belief of another more noble Subſtance than Body, and that the Deity was of an *Incorporeal* or *Spiritual Nature*, we have the united Suffrages of all the Ancient Writers that are preſerved down to our time.

(*a*) Lib. de Nat. Deorum, & Tuſcul. Quæſt. lib. 1.

Cicero tells us, That the Heathen Philoſophers generally defined God to be *Mens pura & ſincera, ſoluta & libera ab omni concretione mortali* (*a*); and ſpeaking

ſpeaking of *Thales Mileſius* in particular, he ſaith of him, *Aquam dixit eſſe Initium Rerum, Deum autem eum Mentem quæ ex aquâ cuncta fingeret.* Now this *Mind* they all diſtinguiſhed plainly from Matter, and looked upon it as a much more Noble Principle than 'twas poſſible to conceive Matter to be. *Lactantius* acquaints of *Pythagoras* (*a*). *Quòd unum deum confitetur, dicens Incorporalem eſſe mentem, quæ per omnem Naturam diffuſa & intenta, vitalem ſenſum cunctis Animalibus tribuat.* And *Plutarch* gives us much the ſame Account of him in his Books, *De Placitis Philoſophorum*, viz. *That he made two Principles; one Active, which was Mind or God: The other Paſſive, or the Matter of the World.* And thoſe Verſes of *Empedocles*, are very remarkable; wherein ſpeaking of the Deity, he aſſerts Him not to be of Humane ſhape; And alſo that,

(*a*) De Irâ Dei, c. 11. p. 742. Oxon.

Lib. 1. c. 3.

Ὀυκ ἔςιν πελάσασθαι οὐδ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἐφικτὸν
Ἡμετέροις, ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν——

(i. e.) *That he is no way perceivable by any of our Senſes*; which is as much as to ſay, he is *Incorporeal.* And in the next Lines he doth expreſly tell us what he is:

Ἀλλὰ φρὴν ἱηρὴ καὶ ἀθέσφατος ἔπλετο μονοῦν,
Φροντίσι κόσμον ἅπαντα καταίσσουσα θοῇσιν.

A ſacred and ineffable Mind, which by ſwift Thoughts moves and actuates the whole World. *Anaxagoras* alſo aſſerted, That (*b*) *an ordering and regulating Mind was the firſt Principle of all things*; and this *Mind* he made, as *Ariſtotle* ſaith of him, μόνον τῶν ὄντων ἁπλοῦν καὶ ἀμιγῆ καὶ καθαρόν. *The only, pure, ſimple, and unmixt*

(*b*) *Plutarch* de Placitis Philoſoph. Lib. 1. c. 3. p. 876.

mixt thing in the World: thereby plainly diſtinguiſhing it from *Matter,* the Parts of which, he, who was as *Sextus Empericus* calls him φυσικώτατος knew very well to be promiſcuouſly blended and mixed togethere very where. *Sextus* alſo tells us, That *That Mind which* Anaxagoras *aſſerted to be God*; was δραστικὸν ἀρχὴν, *an Active Principle*; in oppoſition to *Matter,* which is a *Paſſive one*, * and this is agreeable to what the Poets ſay of *Spiritus intus alit*; *mens agitat molem,* &c. We are told likewiſe by *Sextus,* That *Xenophanes* held ὅτι εἷς καὶ ἀσώματος Θεὸς, *That there is but One God, and he Incorporeal.* And *Plutarch* deſcribing the Deity, hath theſe remarkable words, *God is Mind, a ſeparated Form perfectly unmixed with Matter, and without any thing that is paſſible,* νοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς, χωριστὸν εἶδος, τελέως τὸ ἀμιγὲς πάσης ὕλης, μηδενὶ παθητῷ συμπεπλεγμένον. And in another place he aſſerts, ἀδύνατον ἀρχὴν μίαν ὕλην τῶν ὄντων ἐξ ἧς τὰ πάντα γέγονεν. *That 'tis impoſſible Matter alone can be the ſole Principle of all things* (a).

* *Sect. Empir. adv. Mathem. p. 309.*

(a) De Placit. Philoſ. l. 1. c. 3.

Plato every where diſtinguiſheth between corporeal, and incorporeal Subſtances, calling the former by the Names of αἰσθητὴν Senſible, and the latter always either ἀσώματον or νοητὴν, *immaterial* or *intelligible*; and he ſaith, *That certain intelligible and incorporeal Forms, are the true and firſt Subſtance; and that incorporeal Things which are the greateſt and moſt excellent of all others, are diſcoverable by reaſon only, and nothing elſe* (b).

(b) Νοητὰ εἴδη καὶ ἀσώματα εἶναι τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὐσίαν ἔφη.—Τὰ δὲ ἀσώματα κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα λόγῳ μόνον ἄλλῳ δ' οὐδενὶ, συνορᾶσθαι. In Polit. p. 547. Ficin.

And in another place, he ſaith, *That they were inſtructed by their forefathers, that Mind and a certain wonderful Wiſdom, did at firſt frame, and doth now govern all things.* His words are ὃ πρόσθεν ἡμῶν ἔλεγον,

γον, νοῦν καὶ φρόνησίν τινα θαυμαστὴν συντάττουσαν καὶ διακυβερνᾶν ξύμπαντα. In *Phileb.* p.28. Which sufficiently shews the Antiquity of the Notion of an Incorporeal Deity, and the way also how they came by it. Of the same Opinion also was *Socrates*, as we are told by *Plutarch*, and others. *Lib. de Placit. Philos.* 1. *c.* 3. *Zeno* and the Stoicks defined the Deity to be φύσις νοερὰ καὶ λογικὴ, *an Intellectual and Rational Nature*; or as *Plutarch* recites their Opinion, πνεῦμα νοερὸν καὶ οὐκ ἔχον μὲν μορφὴν, *an Intelligent Spirit devoid of all Bodily shape.* Ibid. And *Sextus Empericus* tells us of *Aristotle*, that he constantly asserted God to be *Incorporeal*, and *the Utmost Bounds of the Universe* (*a*). And *Aristotle* concludes his Book of Physicks with *affirming* (*b*) *that 'tis impossible the first Mover* (or God) *can have any Magnitude; but he must needs be devoid of Parts, and Indivisible.* And *Plutarch* gives us this as the received and common Opinion of the Stoicks, that God was πνεῦμα διῆκον δι' ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, *a Spirit that was extended, or did penetrate throughout the whole World.* De Placitis Philosoph. lib. 1. c. 3. p. 882.

(*a*) Adv. Math. p. 155.

(*b*) Ἀδύνατον τὸ πρῶτον κιν οὖν ἔχειν τὶ μέγεθος — φανερὸν τοίνυν, ὅτι ἀδιαίρετόν ἐστι καὶ ἀμερὲς, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔχον μέγεθος. Nat. Auscult. l. 8. c. 15.

Now by these Passages, and many others that might easily be produced, it appears very plain that the most Ancient Writers had a good clear Notion of God, and that they speak of him as of a *Mind* perfectly distinct from Matter, or as an immaterial or incorporeal Being. Many of them also deliver themselves very expresly as to the Soul of Man; which, as *Plutarch* tells us (*c*), *they generally asserted to be Incorporeal; and that it was naturally a Self-moving and Intelligible Substance.* But of this, more in another place.

(*c*) Οἱ προτεταγμένοι ἀσώματον τὴν ψυχὴν ὑποτίθενται φύσει, λέγοντες αὐτοκίνητον καὶ οὐσίαν νοητὴν. Lib. de Placitis Philos. 4. c. 2. p. 898.

place. And that the Ancients did believe God to be a Spirit, or a most Powerful, Intelligent, and Perfect Immaterial Substance will yet farther appear, if we consider what Notion they had of, and how they defined *Matter* or *Body*. *Plato* describes it by the words προσβολὴ καὶ ἐπαφὴ, that which thrusts against other Bodies, and resists their Touch or Impulse. Others call it τόπου πληρωτικὸν, that which so fills up a place, as, at that time, to exclude from it any other Body. Sometimes they called it the τὸ πάσχον, in contradistinction to the τὸ ποιοῦν, or the τὸ ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις. That is, they distinguished it to be of a *pure passive Nature*, and which was acted and determined only by Impulse from without it, or distinct from it; they knew very well that there was also besides it, some *Active Thing*, something that was *the Cause of Motion* and *Action* in the Universe. For, as *Plutarch* well observes, οὐ δύναται ἢ ἡ ὕλη εἶναι ἐνέργεια, ἐὰν μὴ τὸ ποιοῦν ὑποκείηται. (*a*) *'Tis impossible Matter alone can produce any thing, unless there be besides it some Active Cause. Sextus Empiricus* also gives this Definition of Matter or Body (*b*). *That it is that which resists other things which are brought against it; for Resistance*, saith he, or Impenetrability, *is the true Property of Body.* By these Accounts that they have given us of Matter or Body, 'tis very easie to understand their Notion or Idea of it; which, indeed, was the Just and True one. They thought Matter or Body to be a purely Passive Thing, incapable of moving or acting by it self; but wholly determined either by some Internal and Self-moving Mind, or by the Motions and Impulses of other Bodies without it: That it was διαστατὸν ἀντίτυπον, that is, as we now adays

(*a*) De Placitis Philos. Lib. 1. c. 3.

(*b*) ἀντιτυποῦν δὲ τοῖς εἰς αὐτὸ φερομένοις σῶμα ἐστὶν, ἰδίωμα γὰρ σώματος τὸ ἀντιτυπεῖν. Adv. Math. p. 32.

adays ſpeak, *Impenetrably extended*, and did ſo fill up ſpace or place, as to exclude any other Body from being in the ſame Place with it at the ſame Time: If to this you add what *Ariſtotle*, and ſome others, ſaid of it, that it was alſo capable of all Forms, Figures and Modifications, you have then the whole that ever they thought Matter could do or be. Now from hence 'tis exceeding clear that they could not, as indeed we find actually they did not, think Matter or Body the only Subſtance in the World; and that the Deity was Material or Corporeal. For they always deſcribed the Divine Nature by Attributes and Properties that were the very Reverſes of what they appropriated to Matter or Body. God, they have told us, is an Intelligent Mind, pervading and encompaſſing all things; an Active Energetical Principle; the Cauſe of all Motion and Operation whatever; Intangible, indiviſible, inviſible, and no ways the Object of our Bodily Senſes; But yet whoſe Eſſence is plainly diſcoverable by our reaſoning and Underſtanding Faculty. This was, as we have ſeen, the Notion or Idea that many of the Ancient Philoſophers had of the Deity; and this plainly ſhews us, that they look'd upon him to be what St. *John* here defines him, an Incorporeal Being, or a Spirit. There were indeed ſome even then, as I have before ſhewed, who being wholly immerſed in Matter themſelves, did aſſert that there was nothing elſe but Body in the World. Such were *Leucippus* and *Democritus*; and afterwards *Epicurus* and his Sect, who perverted the Ancient Atomical and true Philoſophy to an Atheiſtical Senſe, and made uſe of it for the baniſhing the Notion and Belief of a God out of their own and

others

others Minds: as, indeed, some others long before them had attempted to do (*a*). But in this, 'tis very plain (as (*b*) an Excellent Person of our Nation hath observed) that these Men did not understand the Philosophy they pretended to: For it doth most clearly follow from the Principles of the True Atomical or Corpuscular Philosophy, that there must be some other Substance, distinct from, and more Noble than Matter; and which is of an Immaterial, Incorporeal or Spiritual Nature. And this, I hope, it will not be judged impertinent briefly to prove at this Time; because some, who seem not so throughly to understand it, have of late reckoned the Mechanical Philosophy among the Causes of the growth of Atheism and Infidelity. It is very much to the Purpose, that the Ancient Atomists before *Democritus* and *Leucippus*, did plainly assert and maintain the Doctrine of Incorporeal Substances, and that the Deity was also of that Nature himself, as I think I have sufficiently proved in this Discourse; and therefore those confident Modern Writers, who say that the *Ancients never had any Notion of an Immaterial Being*, betray equally their Ignorance with their Assurance: for the Doctrine of Immaterial Substances was as well the *Concomitant*, as indeed it is the *Necessary result* of this kind of Philosophy. The Embracers of it, found plainly that they had a clear and distinct Idea of two Things, *viz. Passive Matter*, and *Active Power*; and these they found were perfectly distinct from each other, and no way dependent at all upon each other. To the *former* of these, they only attributed extension and impenetrability, and a Power of being variously figured, modified, disposed and

(*a*) Τῶν δὴ πρώτων φιλοσοφησάντων οἱ πλεῖστοι τὰς ἐν ὕλης εἴδει μόνον ᾠήθησαν ἀρχὰς εἶναι πάντων. *Arist.* Metaph. l. 1. c. 3. p. 842. *Paris.*

(*b*) Dr. *Cudw.* in his *Intellectual Syst. of the Universe.*

and moved. To the *latter*, they aſcribed Cogitation, Life, Senſation, and the Power of Motion, which they plainly ſaw did belong to *this*, and could not do ſo to the *other*. And *theſe Two*, they made the Two Great Principles or General Heads of Being in the Univerſe, and called them by two vaſtly different Names, as I have before ſhewed, *viz.* the τὸ πασχὸν, and the τὸ ποιῆν. The one *Paſſive Matter* or *Bulk*, and the other *Self-Activity*, or *Life*. In the former of theſe, *viz. Paſſive Matter*; they found that there was nothing Real, beſides its Bulk, or impenetrably extended Parts: and that conſequently all *Forms* and *Qualities* in Bodies were no real Entities diſtinct from the Body in which they inhered, but only the Parts of the Body differently modified, diſpoſed and agitated, and therefore they held, that when any Body received a new Form or Quality differing from what it had before, there was no new Entity produced, any more than an old one deſtroyed; for that they look't upon to be perfectly Impoſſible: And this was the true Ground of that Fundamental Axiom of theirs, *That Nothing could be made or produced out of Nothing*; which they did not (as the Modern Atheiſts do) advance at all in Oppoſition to a Creative and Almighty Power's producing all things at firſt from Nothing; but purely againſt the producibleneſs of real Entities out of Nothing, in an Uſual and Natural way: which thoſe that aſſert Forms and Qualities to be Subſtantial and Real Beings, muſt needs grant to be daily done. But it was this, and this only, that that Axiom was levelled againſt. And hence it was that they aſſerted the Deity and the Souls of Men to be

real Entities diſtinct from Matter, and not to be producible out of the Power of Matter; as all Qualities which are nothing but Modes of it, they maintained, were: and this made them perhaps have recourſe to the προϋπαρξις and μετενσωματωσις, the *Præ-exiſtence* and *Tranſmigration* of Souls; for they could never believe their Souls were, as one expreſſes it, *younger than their Bodies*, and that they periſhed, when the Bodies died. And therefore nothing can be plainer, than that the very Principles of this Philoſophy did lead Men to the Acknowledgment of Incorporeal Subſtances, and forced them to believe Life, Motion, and Cogitation to be things that could not be Modifications of Matter, nor periſhable and producible, as the common Qualities and Forms of Body or extended Bulk are. And thus when it is rightly conſidered and throughly underſtood, the Atomical or Mechanical Philoſophy is ſo far from being any way inſtrumental to the leading Men into Atheiſm, that there is none other that doth ſo truly diſtinguiſh between Matter and Incorporeal Beings; none that renders the Operations and Qualities of Bodies ſo Intelligible, and none that prepares ſo clear, natural, and eaſie a way for the Demonſtration of Immaterial Subſtances, as this kind of Philoſophy doth. Indeed, as almoſt all things are, ſo *This* is capable of, and hath been made uſe of to ill Purpoſes by its Atheiſtical Votaries; who did anciently, as they do now, aſſert that Cogitation, Life, Senſation, and Active Power, were all producible out of bare Matter without a Deity. But as this was what the True Atomiſts never could think poſſible; ſo it is really involved with the moſt monſtrous Abſurdities that ever any Opinion

nion was: and which therefore ought not to be charged on the Philoſophy it ſelf, but only on that Dark, Unintelligible and Inconſiſtent Syſtem of it, which the Ignorant Atheiſts have Compiled; and that only to render it ſubſervient to their wicked Deſigns of excluding the Idea's of God and of Incorporeal Subſtances out of the World. Tho' (God be thanked) they do in this Point ſo far fail of Succeſs, that nothing can be clearer than that 'tis utterly impoſſible to account for any firſt Cauſe of things, for Cogitation, Life, Senſation, or Motion, according to their Principle, that there is no other Subſtance but Body: And this neceſſarily leads me to another very good Argument, for the Neceſſity of allowing Incorporeal Subſtances, and to prove that God himſelf is of that Nature, or a Spirit, *viz. The ſtrange Abſurdities of the contrary Opinion.*

But theſe being very many, and it being of great moment truly to clear up this Point, in an Age wherein Men are ſo fond of Corporealiſm. I ſhall deferr this till my next Diſcourſe: wherein I ſhall finiſh this and my remaining Arguments to *Prove God to be a Spirit*, and that there are Beings of an Immaterial and Incorporeal Nature.

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

UMI

THE
Fifth Sermon.

JOHN iv. 24.
God is a Spirit. ——

I Have already ſhewn the Meaning and Import of theſe Words, and what we underſtand by *God's being a Spirit*. I have ſhewn you alſo the Atheiſt's Objections againſt the Immaterial Nature of God, and the Exiſtence of Incorporeal Subſtances; and have endeavoured to Refute them, from Two Arguments. I have proved,

1. That 'tis a precarious and unfair way of Arguing againſt the Exiſtence of any thing, only becauſe our particular Apprehenſions and Conceptions cannot maſter it: And that it will not follow, That there is no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Subſtance, on the Account only of ſome Mens declaring that they cannot conceive how any ſuch thing can be. Where likewiſe I ſhewed, That the Notion of a Spirit, or an Immaterial Subſtance, is as Intelligible as that of Body; and that we have as much reaſon to believe the Exiſtence of the former, as of the latter.

2. I

2. I have plainly proved, That the Notion of Incorporeal Subſtances hath all along been believed and received by many Knowing and Judicious Men amongſt the moſt Ancient Writers and Philoſophers; and conſequently that it can neither be Nonſence and Impoſſible, nor of ſo late an Original as the perverted Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*: both which the Atheiſts are pleaſed to aſſert.

3. I proceed now to ſpeak to a *Third* Argument, To prove the Deity to be of a Spiritual or Immaterial Nature, and that there are Incorporeal Subſtances: And this I ſhall draw from the many and ſtrange Abſurdities of the contrary Opinion, *That there is nothing but Matter in the World.* And if theſe can fully be made to appear, I hope the Doctrine involved with them will alſo appear falſe and precarious; and that the contrary Opinion, of the Real Exiſtence of Incorporeal Beings, will find an eaſie admittance into our Faith. But here I muſt premiſe, as taken for granted, That we are all agreed on the Definition of, or know what we mean by Matter or Body, *viz.* That it is *Subſtance Impenetrably extended*; whereby we diſtinguiſh it from Spirit, which is a Thinking Subſtance without Corporeal Extenſion, or without having *Partes extra Partes.* For if this be not the Notion which our Adverſaries have of it, as well as we; 'Tis in vain to diſpute about it at all. If therefore they have any other Idea of it that is different from this, let them produce it, and make it as clear and Intelligible as this is; for without doing ſo, they do nothing to the purpoſe. And if they have not a clear and diſtinct Idea of Matter or Body, how come they ſo boldly to ſay that Matter and Subſtance

ſtance are all one? how can they diſtinguiſh the Idea's of Body and Spirit ſo plainly, as to be ſure there can be no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Subſtance, but that it implies a Contradiction? Unleſs they fully know what Matter or Body is, there may be Millions of Varieties and Degrees of Immaterial Subſtances; or there may be no ſuch thing as Body at all, for any thing they can prove to the contrary. The Atheiſt muſt then do one of theſe two things; he muſt either eſtabliſh a new Notion of Matter, that ſhall be ſo intelligible and plain, that all Mankind ſhall as readily acquieſce in it, as they do in the *old* and *common* one, or elſe he muſt reſolve to keep to *That*. The former of theſe he hath not yet done, nor I believe is very ready to do; but when he doth it, 'twill be time enough to conſider it. In the mean while, I will readily join Iſſue with him, on the common and received Notion of Body: And from thence undertake to maintain, That nothing is more abſurd and unaccountable than their Aſſertion, *That there is no other Subſtance but Matter or Body in the World.* For,

Firſt, Had there been nothing elſe but Matter in the World from Eternity (and if there be nothing elſe now, there never was any thing elſe) I cannot poſſibly ſee how theſe Gentlemen can account for Motion, (*a*) or ſhew us how Matter came firſt to be moved. And Matter without Motion ſure could never be God, never be the Cauſe of any thing, nor could it ever produce, act, or do any thing whatever. Before Motion began, Matter could have been nothing but an heavy, lifeleſs Lump of vaſt extended Bulk; which muſt have lain alſo for ever in the ſame dead

(*a*) Νῦς μὲν ἀρχὴ κινήσεως, ſaith *Anaxagoras*. Vid. *Diog. Laert.*

dead and unactive Poſition, if nothing had been ſuperinduced to put it into Motion and Action. And no one ſure can be ſo ſtupid as to call this a Deity! This is as Mr. *Blount* rudely and irreverently expreſſeth himſelf, worſe than to ſuppoſe (*a*) a *Hum-Drum-Deity, chewing of his own Nature; a Droning God, that ſits hoarding up of his Providence from his Creatures.* And this even he can't but acknowledge, *is an Atheiſm no leſs Irrational, than to deny the very Eſſence of a Divine Being.* I hope therefore they will grant, that Matter without Motion cannot be ſuppos'd to be a Deity. And if ſo, then the Divine Nature (whatever it be) muſt be *ſomething diſtinct from, and more Noble than Matter*, and more akin to Motion, than to Matter or Body in general, or to it *quatenus Matter*, as the Schools ſpeak. And indeed, Motion taken in this ſenſe, not for a tranſlation of Body from one place to another, but for the Active Cauſe of Motion, may be very well ſaid to be Incorporeal, or the Deity it ſelf. But how came this Motion into Matter at firſt? and which way did Matter attain this *Divine Activity*, or *God-like Energy*? Here they muſt aſſert one of theſe three things, either, 1. That Motion came into Matter from ſomething without it, and diſtinct from it. Or, 2. That Motion is Eſſential to Matter, and Co-eternal with it. Or, 3. That it came into it afterwards by Chance, or without any Cauſe at all. The Firſt of theſe they will not ſay, I doubt, becauſe it's Truth: but however, if they do, our Controverſie is at an end; for we believe that 'twas a Divine and powerful Mind, perfectly diſtinct from, and more Noble than Matter, who firſt made it, and moved it, and doth ſtill continue

(*a*) *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 126, 127.

tinue to modifie and diſpoſe it according to his Infinite Wiſdom and Providence.

And one would think no Man can be ſo ſenſeleſs as to maintain the laſt, *viz.* That *Motion came into Matter without any Cauſe at all*, and that it was *Chance* only that firſt produced it; for Chance here ſignifies nothing in reality: And truly, Men that will be ſo ridiculouſly abſurd as to aſſert, that a Body, or Particle of Matter, that is once at reſt, may move by *Chance* only, or may *Chance to move of it ſelf*, though there be nothing to cauſe its Motion, deſerve no ſerious Refutation, but ought to be treated only as we do Fools and Madmen, with ſilent Pity and Compaſſion. And yet ſo very fond are ſome Perſons of any thing that oppoſes Truth, that they will run into the greateſt Abſurdities to maintain it. For a late Corpuſculiſt is pleas'd to ſay, (*a*) *That Matter can move of it ſelf:* and to ſhew his deep Skill in Philoſophy, he tells us, that *Wind*, *Fire*, *and very fine-ſifted ſmall Duſt*, *are Matter*, *and yet Self movers*. And of *Wind* and *Fire*, he profoundly aſſerts, *That they cannot loſe their Motion*, *or ceaſe Moving*, *ſo long as they continue to be Wind and Fire*. That is, As long as Wind and Fire are in Motion, they cannot ceaſe to move. This, indeed, is a very deep and important Diſcovery! But yet 'tis what hardly any Man would have publiſh'd in Print, but one that concludes a Body muſt needs move of it ſelf, only becauſe he can't ſee with his Eyes the Cauſe or Origin of its Motion. And yet even this he may often ſee in the caſe of *Fire*, if he will but vouchſafe to obſerve how 'tis uſually kindled. A little Conſideration would have ſatisfied him alſo, that *Winds* may be produced in the Atmoſphere, by

(*a*) *Obſerv.* on Dr. *Bentley's* Serm. *p.* 6, 7.

the Air's being moved ſome way, by Heat, Compreſſion, or ſome other Accidental Cauſe, as well as in an Eolipile, or a Pair of Bellows. And as for his *fine Duſt's riſing up in a Cloud of it ſelf*; had he underſtood that the Agitation of any Fluid will keep the ſmall Particles of any heavier Matter mixed with it from deſcending to the bottom of it, nay, and raiſe them up from thence too; and had he not forgotten that this was the caſe here, (the Air being ſo agitated by the Motion of Sifting) he would not, ſure, have been ſo ſilly as to have brought theſe as Inſtances of Spontaneous Motion in Matter. But however, he is not the firſt that hath been guilty of this Abſurdity. For *Ariſtotle* upbraids ſome, in his time, (*a*) *with introducing Motion into Matter, without any Cauſe*, or without ſuppoſing any Principle whence it ſhould proceed.

(*a*) *Metaph.* l. 1. c. 3.

The Second Point therefore, is, I ſuppoſe, that which our Corporealiſt will adhere to, *viz. That Motion is Eſſential to, and Co-eternal with Matter*; and that either all Matter and Motion taken together, or elſe ſome Fine and Subtile Parts of it are the Deity. But this, if it be throughly conſidered, will appear almoſt as abſurd and unaccountable as that Matter ſhould be moved without any Cauſe at all. For, in the firſt place, 'tis plain, That Motion is *not Eſſentially included in the Idea of Matter*. I can conceive Matter to the full as well, if not better, when it is at reſt, as when it is in Motion. When I look on any Body, or conſider any determinate quantity of Matter, I can conceive that 'tis a Subſtance that is impenetrably extended, diviſible, and moveable; that it fills up ſuch a ſpace, and that it excludes any Body from being there with it at the ſame time, without conceiving it to be

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in Motion at all; much leſs being forced to acknowledge that it *muſt be*, and was *always* in Motion. Whereas certainly, if *Motion* were as *Eſſential* to Matter, as *Impenetrability* and *Extenſion*, 'twere as impoſſible for me to conceive it at reſt, as it is to conceive it without thoſe Qualifications or Properties: But no doubt I have as true an Idea of a Stone or a Bullet, or of any other Body or Part of Matter, when it lies ſtill on the Ground, as I have of it when 'tis projected from a Sling or a Gun. Now if Motion be not Eſſentially included in the Idea or Notion that we have of Matter, how can any one ſuppoſe it as Eſſential to, and Co-eternal with it? This is a Concluſion beyond the power of our Reaſon to make; no one can come to it naturally, and in the ordinary way of Apprehending and Reaſoning; and 'tis much more Unintelligible and Myſterious than a great many other things which they pretend they cannot believe purely on this account.

But ſuppoſing that *Motion be Eſſential to Matter*; it muſt then be ſo to every Particle of it, and that Uniformly alike, or in the ſame Proportion. And if ſo, then every Atom of Matter muſt always retain its Original Degree of Motion or Velocity, and can never poſſibly be deprived of it: For no Accidental Cauſe can any way either encreaſe or diminiſh, promote or hinder the Eſſential Properties of a Being. Thus, for Inſtance, take a Particle of Matter, or any Body whatever, and move it as faſt or as ſlow as you pleaſe, place it where or how you pleaſe, ſeparate it from other Particles or Bodies, or combine it with them; ſtill 'twill retain its Eſſential Properties of *Extenſion* and *Impenetrability*, and they will receive

no *Intenſion* and *Remiſſion* all this while. But now 'tis quite otherwiſe in the caſe of Motion; we find the ſame Body may be brought to move ſometimes faſter, ſometimes ſlower, and ſometimes (to all appearance) be reduced to abſolute reſt; which could never be, if Motion were Eſſential to each Particle of Matter, in ſuch a Determinate Degree of Velocity, and there were (as is now ſuppoſed) Nothing elſe *without* or *diſtinct* from Matter to put it into Motion. For then nothing could ever accelerate or retard its Motion: no one Body could ever move faſter or ſlower than another. But a *Snail* or the *Pigritia* would keep pace with the ſeemingly Inſtantaneous irradiations of Light.

And thus we may ſee plainly, that without ſuppoſing ſome Principle of Motion diſtinct from Matter, Motion could never have come into it, nor have been co-eternal with it.

But allowing them that Motion ſhould get into Matter neither they nor we know how, or that it is Eternal and Eſſential to it: If there be nothing elſe but Matter and Motion in the Univerſe, which way will they account for the Deity? they dare not ſay Matter alone without Motion can be God; and I think there can be nothing more clear, than that Bare Motion in Matter can never make a Deity. For if Motion came into Matter any time after its Exiſtence, the Deity muſt then be produced, and conſequently receive a Beginning; and ſo the Firſt Cauſe of all things muſt be cauſed himſelf after all things, which is contradictory to the Notion of a Deity.

If they ſay that Motion is Co-eternal with, and Eſſential to Matter, and the Deity be Matter thus Eternally

nally moved; then either every Particle of Matter muſt be eſſentially God, or elſe he muſt be the reſult of the whole, or of ſome Parts of Matter combined together. If the former be aſſerted, there muſt of neceſſity be as many Gods as there are Atoms or Phyſical Monads: for each of them are Individually diſtinct from each other, and have their ſeparate and peculiar Properties of Impenetrability, Extenſion and Motion; which in this fine Hypotheſis, are the only Perfections of the Divine Nature. But no doubt they will ſay, that 'tis not any one Particle of Matter that is a God alone, and therefore they cannot be all Deities ſingly; But *'tis all of them*, or at leaſt a *good convenient Number* of theſe luckily combined together, out of whom the Deity is compoſed. Though which of theſe to ſtick to, our Corporealiſts are very much at a loſs; *Spinoza* aſſerting the former, and Mr. *Hobbs* the latter. But I think 'tis no great matter which they adhere to; for both are alike unaccountable and abſurd: For if there be not a Divine Nature, and its Perfections, in each ſingle Atom of Matter; will barely combining ſome, or all of them, together make a Deity of them? Can it ever enter into the Heart of Man to conceive that barely collecting together a parcel of roving Particles of Matter, ſuch as agitated Duſt, or Motes moving up and down in the Sun, will ever unite them into a God? give the Combination Almighty Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs? when there was nothing like this before in any of the Atoms themſelves? Certainly, Men that can aſſert ſuch monſtrous Opinions as theſe, do not think as other People do; or, indeed, rather do not think at all. Theſe certainly labour under the Diſeaſe mentioned

tioned by *Epictetus*, of ἀπολίθωσις or ἀπονέκρωσις τῆς νοήσεως, (*a*) a *ſtony Inſenſibility or Deadneſs of Underſtanding*, by which they are beſotted and ſtupified in their Intellectuals; ſo that they can believe and aſſert any thing, if it be ſubſervient to their deſigns, tho' never ſo contradictory to the cleareſt light of Reaſon and Truth.

(*a*) *Arrian.* Lib. 1. c. 5.

But to go on: Granting to the Corporealiſts that Matter either hath been *always* in Motion, or for what time they pleaſe; allowing its Particles to be *ſmall* or *great*, to *move ſwiftly* or *ſlowly*, and to be *combined* together, or *disjoined* from each other as they think fit. I enquire what all this will ſignifie towards producing of *Cogitation*, *Wiſdom*, and *Underſtanding*? or to the production of Life, Self Activity, or Spontaneous Power? And yet Theſe are the moſt Great and Noble Things in the World; theſe are the higheſt Perfections of the Divine Nature, and in theſe we place the Eſſence of the Deity.

Now here Matter and Motion is more than ever at a loſs; and I think it demonſtratively certain that it cannot account for theſe things. *Ariſtotle* did very truly find fault with the Corporealiſts of his Time, that they did not, as ours cannot now, aſſign τὸ εὖ καὶ καλῶς αἴτιον, (*b*) any Cauſe of well and fit; any Origin of, or Reaſon for that *Wiſdom* and *Regularity*, that *harmonious Relation* and Aptitude of one part of the Creation to another, which is ſo very conſpicuous in all things; ſuppoſing that there is nothing in Nature but Matter and Motion. And it is moſt certainly true, that the Idea which we have of Body doth not neceſſarily include Cogitation in it, nor our Notion of Cogitation include Body: but they are

(*b*) Lib. 1. Metaph. c. 3.

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two as diſtinct Idea's as any we have. So far are they from being the ſame thing, that we cannot poſſibly conceive Cogitation with Extenſion. No Man ever conceived a Thought to be ſo many Inches or Yards *long*; to be *deep*, *thick* or *broad*, to be diviſible into two or more Parts, or to have any Kind of Figure or determinate Poſition or Extenſion; whereas if whatſoever be unextended, or not Body, be abſolutely Nothing, as theſe Gentlemen aſſert: Cogitation, Wiſdom, Underſtanding, and Spontaneous Power muſt be *nothing*: or elſe they muſt be *figurate Bodies*; than which nothing can be more abſurd. And if we farther examine our own Mind, and conſult our own Reaſon, we ſhall find that we cannot poſſibly conceive how thinking, Wiſdom, Conſciouſneſs, and Spontaneous Power can poſſibly be the reſult of Bare Motion of the Parts of Matter. Was there ever any one that ſeriouſly believed a Particle of Matter was any Wiſer or had any more Underſtanding for being moved than it was before when it lay ſtill? for let it be never ſo briskly agitated, is it not ſtill Body? there is no other Idea ariſeth from hence, but only that it changeth its place, and is united ſucceſſively to ſeveral parts of ſpace, that it will move ſuch other Particles of Matter as 'tis capable of, and be retarded in its Motion by hitting or ſtriking againſt them; theſe, and ſuch like, are all the Ideas that we can have of a Body in Motion; but what is this to *Thought* and *Conſciouſneſs*? Did ever any one but a ſtupid Corporealiſt imagine that a Particle of Matter by being moved, was made Intelligent? and that its travelling from place to place, made it underſtand all things in its way? and did

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any one ever think that the Knowledge of ſuch a rambling Atom encreaſed in Proportion to the velocity of its Motion? Yes, doubtleſs! and thus a Bullet diſcharged from the Mouth of a Cannon, ought to be look'd upon as one of the moſt Ingenious Beings in Nature. And hence it will follow, that the more haſt any one makes to tumble over Books, or to ramble over Countries; and the more precipitantly he makes a judgment of Notions or Opinions, the Better Account he can give of Authors and Places; and the more ſolid and ſubſtantial will be his Learning. This, indeed, is the beſt Account that can be given of the fineneſs and quickneſs of Thought, that *ſome Men* ſo much pretend to; for this way *they* may come by a vaſt ſhare of Penetration, and be volatilized far above the dull ſtudious and conſiderate Vulgar: and the Event ſhews that *they* frequently make uſe of the Experiment.

But again; As we cannot poſſibly conceive that the *Motion of one Particle* of Matter *alone*, can give it Knowledge and Underſtanding; ſo neither can we ſuppoſe that a *Body compoſed of many of them*, can acquire any ſuch thing barely on the Account of the Motion or Agitation of its Parts, for Motion only will do no more to the whole, than it did to each one ſingly; and 'tis not conceivable that Three, or Three Millions of Bullets will be any wiſer for being diſcharged together, than if they were all ſhot ſingly in purſuit of Underſtanding. Nor can any happy *Combination* or *Conſtitution* of *Parts* avail any thing in this Caſe, any more than Motion; nor can *that* be effectual to ſuper-induce *Wiſdom* and *Underſtanding* into Matter. The σῶμα λεπτόμερες will be no more a God,

a God, than *Jupiter's Log was among the Frogs*, nor than the moſt *denſe* and *groſs* body in Nature. For after all the various Poſitions, Configurations, and Combinations of Matter, is it not Matter ſtill? will rarefying or ſubtilizing of Matter change its Nature and Eſſential Properties? A Rare Body is nothing but a contexture of fine and ſubtile Particles, which being ſeparated farther aſunder than is uſual, are alſo perhaps more briskly agitated and moved. And pray what is here new? what will this do towards Divinity? will bare *Figure* and *Poſition* of Parts change the Nature of thoſe Parts, and give them Cogitation and Knowledge when they had no ſuch thing ſingly and before? will adding, ſubtracting, multiplying or dividing of Numbers, make them any thing elſe more Noble than what they were before? will not the *Summs*, *Remainders*, *Products*, or *Quotients* be ſtill Figures and Numbers like the firſt Digits, out of which theſe do by Combination or various Poſitions ariſe? and is it not juſt ſo with Matter? will a Particle of it be made any more Wiſe and Intelligent, for being render'd ſmaller than it was before? and hath a little Particle more Senſe than a larger? will Three or Four, or Four Millions of theſe be more ingenious than a Body or Lump that is as big as them all? and will moving a few Atoms a good diſtance from each other, *Separate* them into Knowledge, and *Disjoin* them into an Underſtanding Power which none of them had before? If Men can ſwallow ſuch things as theſe, and think at this Extravagant and Unaccountable Rate; I fear all good Arguments and ſound Reaſon will be loſt upon them, and they ought to be neglected as downright Stupid or Diſtracted.

And yet theſe, and ſuch like Abſurdities, muſt be the Natural Conſequences of ſuppoſing Matter and Motion alone capable of *thinking*, that Matter can be *rarified* into a Deity, and that Divine and Almighty *Wiſdom*, *Knowledge*, *Goodneſs* and *Power*, are the reſult of *Body luckily diſpoſed and moved*; which yet was the Opinion of *Hobbs*, and is ſtill of many of his Admirers and Followers. For notwithſtanding thoſe Excellent Demonſtrations that many Learned Men (*a*) amongſt us have eſtabliſhed, that Matter and Motion cannot poſſibly produce Cogitation, Conſciouſneſs, Underſtanding and Liberty of Will: There is lately an Ignorant Corporealiſt who aſſerts, *That the Inflamed and glowing Particles of the Blood, called Spirits, tho' they are not in themſelves Sentient and Intelligent, are yet the active Principle of Life and Motion, of Senſe and Underſtanding in Man and Beaſt; and do act the Underſtanding or Brain to apprehend, judge and remember.* Now by this 'tis plain that he ſuppoſes Cogitation, Underſtanding, Conſciouſneſs and Liberty, and all the Faculties of the Soul of Man to be nothing but the reſult of ſome peculiar Motions in a Fitly organized Body. The Animal Spirits he thinks are like the Elaſtick Particles in the Spring of a Watch, tho' they cannot tell what a Clock it is themſelves, yet they can by means of the Spring which they actuate, do that and many other things that the Movement ſhall be fitted for: Or to make uſe of a Compariſon of his own; The Animal Spirits may do as the Wind doth in the Cheſt of an Organ, tho' it can make no Muſick of it ſelf, yet by being communicated ſo as to inſpire the ſeveral Pipes, it may actuate them into a very fine Harmony. It

(*a*) Dr. *Cudworth*, Dr. *Bentley*, and others.

(*b*) Obſervations on Dr. *Bentley*'s Sermon, p. 10.

It is not my Buſineſs nor Deſign to diſcourſe *here* of the Soul of Man: but yet I would fain beg theſe Corporealiſts clearly to explain, how *Self-Conſciouſneſs*, *Reflection*, and *Liberty of Action* can poſſibly be accounted for by this Hypotheſis. For this neceſſarily makes Men meer Machines at long run. An Engine is never the more *free* and *conſcious* to its ſelf of its own Operations for being fine and curiouſly contrived: And the wonderful Clock at *Strasburgh* knows no more what it doth, nor is it any more the *Spontaneous Cauſe* of its ſo many and curious Motions, than the Ancient *Clepſydra*, or a modern *Hour-glaſs* knoweth what it is about, when it rudely meaſureth the Duration of any Part of Time. For whatever is performed by meer Matter and Motion muſt needs be neceſſary in every ſtep and degree of its courſe, be the way of acting in the Engine never ſo curious, and never ſo remote from the cogniſance of our Senſes. They know well enough, as I ſhall ſhew below, that there is no poſſible room for freedom of Action, Conſciouſneſs of any Operation, nor for a Cogitative and Reaſoning Power, according to this way of explicating the Operations of the Humane Soul. For in the Animal Spirits they grant there is no ſuch thing; they are only a fiery and briskly agitated Fluid, which ſerves to actuate any Part of the Rational Machine *pro re natâ*: And theſe ſeveral Parts or Organs of the Machine can no more produce any ſuch thing without the Animal Spirits, than the Hand or Dial-Plate of a Watch can, or any other Part of a curious Inſtrument. If therefore you enquire of them, wherein they place this Cogitation, Self-Conſciouſneſs and Liberty; they will tell you *'tis in the*

Man, 'tis in the whole; 'tis neither his *Soul* alone, nor his *Body* alone; 'tis no Spiritual Subſtance diſtinct from Matter, but 'tis the whole Man that thinks, reaſons, and acts freely by the form of the whole: But this is very unaccountable, and is what neither they nor any one elſe, I believe, can ever apprehend or conceive; that *Liberty* ſhould be the reſult of *Neceſſarily moved Matter*; that *Cogitation* ſhould ariſe from *Senſeleſs and Unthinking Atoms*, and that *Knowledge* and *Conſciouſneſs* of its own Operations ſhould come into any Engine by its being finely and curiouſly contrived, and be nothing but the neceſſary reſult of bare local Motion, and rightly Organized Matter.

Theſe Abſurdities ſome other Corporealiſts clearly perceiving, and being fully convinced that 'tis impoſſible to account for Cogitation, Conſciouſneſs, and the like, from bare Matter and Motion; and to educe the Perfections of the Deity out of the Power of Matter only. Theſe, I ſay, had recourſe to another way of maintaining their beloved Aſſertion, *that there is no other Subſtance but Body*. They aſſert, *that Cogitation is Eſſential to Matter*: or, as *Spinoza* words it, *All Subſtance is eſſentially Cogitative and Extended*; ſo that as there is no Subſtance but what is *Material*, ſo there is none but what is *Cogitative* too. Indeed, as I ſhewed you before, he aſſerts that there is but *One only Subſtance*, which *is God*, or in other words, *Univerſal Matter*; and Cogitation and Extenſion (he ſaith) *are the two Infinite Attributes, or elſe the Affections of the Attributes of the Deity* (*a*). And this, with a great deal of Aſſurance (as the way of theſe Writers is) he pretends to demonſtrate Mathematically, by a Pompous, tho' a very Obſcure, *Apparatus* of *Definitions*, *Axioms*, *Poſtulates*

(*a*) *Op. Poſthum.* p. 12. & 14.

ſtulates and *Propoſitions*. But it is not *calling* a thing a Demonſtration, that will make it to *be* ſo; nor concluding with *Quod erat Demonſtrandum*, that will make every body acquieſce in a Propoſition, when it is either perfectly unintelligible or falſe. And yet ſuch are thoſe that *Spinoza* brings to prove and ſupport this ſtrange Opinion. The Monſtrous Abſurdities of which, I ſhall now conſider.

And Firſt, 'Tis plain, That if Cogitation be as Eſſential to Matter as Extenſion; Then all and every Particle of it muſt needs be a *Thinking Subſtance or Body* by it ſelf, *Diſtinct* from all Other Particles of Matter in the World. There is no one doubts but 'tis ſo, in reference to the proper and allowed Affections of Body, *Impenetrability* and *Extenſion*. Every leaſt Particle or Atom of Matter hath *theſe* Properties as compleat within it ſelf, as they are in the whole Bulk of the Univerſe, or in any larger Body whatſoever: Theſe are alſo individually diſtinct in each Particle; ſo that its Properties, though of the ſame kind, are not the very ſame with thoſe of other Parts of Matter. Now if to each ſuch Particle of Matter Cogitation be alſo added; then every Atom in the Univerſe will be a Thinking, Intelligent and Reaſoning Being, diſtinct from all the reſt, and have its own proper and peculiar Faculties and Operations; 'twill be a *different Perſon* from all Others; and every Individual Particle of Matter will be *ſo* from it, and from every one elſe in the World. Every Atom alſo will be equal to any of the reſt, in reſpect of this *Cogitative Power*; will have it in the very ſame Proportion, and not be wiſer or more fooliſh, duller or more ingenious than its neighbours. And if this be

ſo

ſo (as it muſt neceſſarily be, if all Matter be Eſſentially Cogitative) then there muſt either be no God at all, or elſe every Particle of Matter muſt be a diſtinct God by it ſelf; and ſo the moſt ridiculous Polytheiſm that ever was imagin'd, muſt be introduced and allowed of. For if there be any ſuch things as *Perfect Knowledge*, *Power*, *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, *every one* of theſe Particles muſt *have* it: For 'tis impoſſible *Infinite* or Perfect Power, Wiſdom, Knowledge and Goodneſs, can be produced out of *finite*; the leſſer can never produce the greater, nor any thing make or give that which it hath not within it ſelf: And therefore it plainly follows, that either there is no Deity at all, or elſe that every Particle of Matter muſt be a God by it ſelf, according to this Hypotheſis. For finite or imperfect Cogitation can no more be the Cauſe of Infinite, than *Cogitation* can ariſe from incogitative Matter. And this *Spinoza* ſaw very well; and therefore he aſſerts *all Cogitation*, as well as *all Subſtance*, to be *Infinite* (*a*). Indeed, to avoid this abominable Abſurdity of *each Particle of Matter's being God by it ſelf*; he ſaith, that there is *but one only Subſtance in Nature, and that this is God* (*b*.) But this will not help him out, nor do him much ſervice in defending him from the horrid Abſurdities of this Notion. For if by *Subſtance*, he mean only *Subſtance* in general, or the Idea that we have of ſome *Subſtratum*, *Support* or *Subject of Inheſion* in which we conceive the Properties and Accidents of Real Beings to inhere; as by his Definition of *Subſtance* he ſeems to imply; 'Tis plain, this is only a *Metaphyſical* Notion, only a general *Word* or *Term* that ſerves to denote our conception of ſomething in a Being that doth not

(*a*) *Op. Poſt.* p. 21. 6. 4, 5.

(*b*) Ib. p. 12.

depend

depend upon the Properties of *it*, nor inhere in *them*, but *they* upon and in *it*. But we can have no Notion of *Subſtance exiſting without any Properties*, any more than of *Properties* without *it*. If therefore he mean that God is ſuch a Subſtance as this, that God is the *Term or Idea of Subſtance* in general, he makes the Deity nothing at all but a meer Name, a meer *Ens Rationis*, or Creature of the Brain only; than which nothing can be more ridiculous and fooliſh. For 'tis the *Attributes* or *Properties* of the Deity that we chiefly contend for, and which we are chiefly obliged to Acknowledge and Reverence; and 'tis *Theſe* that we aſſert muſt be *inherent in an Infinite and Immaterial Subſtance, or Spirit*. But if by there being *but one only Subſtance*, which he ſaith is God, *Spinoza* means, that the Deity is the whole Maſs of Beings or of Matter in the Univerſe, as by what he delivers in many places, I do really believe that he did; for he aſſerts, that *all Corporeal Subſtance is Infinite and One* (*c*); and that *Extenſion* and *Cogitation* are the *Attributes*, or the *Affections of the Attributes of God*, as I hinted before. I ſay, if this be his Opinion, there cannot poſſibly be a more unaccountable, abſurd and impoſſible Notion of God advanced. And 'tis alſo abſolutely inconſiſtent and contradictious with what he doth at other times aſſert. For if *Subſtance*, *Matter*, and *God*, ſignifie all the ſame thing, and all Matter be *Eſſentially Cogitative*, as ſuch; Then 'tis plain, as I have ſhewed already, that God cannot be the whole Matter of the Univerſe, but each Particle of Matter will be a God by it ſelf. For if there be any ſuch thing as Infinite Perfection, it muſt be Eſſentially in every Particle of Matter; otherwiſe Infinite Perfection

(*c*) Ib. p. 14.

may

may ariſe out of what is only Finite, which is impoſſible. And if every Particle of Matter have this Infinite Perfection, the whole Maſs of theſe, Collectively conſidered, will be by no means *One God*, or *One Being*, *Infinitely Perfect*, but a Swarm of Innumerable Deities, every one of which will be Perſonally diſtinct from each other, and yet contain all poſſible Perfection in it ſelf. But allowing him all the Collective Maſs of Beings, or the Univerſe to be God; What a ſtrange kind of a Deity would this make? The Divine Nature muſt then neceſſarily be *Diviſible*, *part of it here*, and *part there*; part of it in *Motion*, and part of it at *Reſt*; part of it *Hot*, and part *Cold*; part *Fire*, and part *Water*; and, in a word, ſubject to all manner of *Imperfections*, *Viciſſitudes*, *Changes*, *Contrarieties* and *Alterations* that can be imagined. But this the common Senſe of all Mankind will abhorr and deteſt to be ſpoken of the Deity: and beſides, 'tis contrary to what *Spinoza* aſſerts in other places, where he ſaith Subſtance is *Indiviſible* (*d*). But how there can be *but One Only Subſtance*, and *that* the Matter of the Univerſe; and how this Subſtance can be *Indiviſible*, when yet each Particle of Matter muſt be a diſtinct Subſtance by it ſelf, and is *diviſible*, and divided from all others, as our Reaſon and our Senſes do every day inform us, is a flight of Metaphyſicks above my Underſtanding, and can, I believe, never be conceived by any one that underſtands the meaning of the Words or Terms ſuch an Opinion ſhall be delivered in. But he indeed that doth not, and that will admire lofty and inſignificant Sounds, without Senſe, or he that hath ſome wicked and baſe Deſign to cover under ſuch Cant, may conceive any thing, or at leaſt ſay that he doth ſo. The

(*d*) Ib. p. 11.

The Operations and Actions also of a Corporeal Deity (were it possible there should be such an one) must be all absolutely Necessary, and determined by pure Physical and Mechanical Fatality. For he would be really and truly *Natura Naturata*, only the bare Result of Motion in Matter, as 'tis variously formed, figured, moved and disposed so as to produce any Natural Effect. And this, I doubt not but some of these Corporealists very well understand; and that is the reason that makes them so very fond of the Notion of a Corporeal Deity, and of asserting, That there is nothing in the World but Body: For then they know very well, that there can be nothing but ὑλικὴ ἀνάγκη in Nature, such a Physical Necessity as will perfectly exclude all Freedom and Liberty of Will amongst Men, and consequently destroy all Notions of, and Distinctions between Good and Evil. They don't care to say plainly there is no God, that looks a little too bare-faced: for *Atheism* is a Name they don't love to take. But they will readily and studiously endeavour to advance such an Account and Notion of a Deity as shall do as well; such an one as they know is in effect the same as to say there is no God at all. And this the representing him as *Corporeal*, will effectually do; for this subjects Him to a Physical Necessity, makes Him nothing at all but Nature, and deprives both Him and us of the Noble Principle of *Freedom of Will*: and then they know that there can be no such things as Rewards and Punishments proportionate to Mens Actions; but that all things are alike, without any distinction of Good and Evil, and consequently that they may do any thing that they have a mind to. And this appears to be the Issue that

they would willingly bring all things to; For if this were not the caſe, what Reaſon can be given why Men ſhould be ſuch zealous Sticklers for a *Corporeal Deity*? Why ſhould they ſtill, in ſpite of Senſe, Reaſon and Philoſophy, maintain, That there can be no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal or *Immaterial Subſtance*? Is it purely out of a devout and holy Deſire to underſtand the Divine Nature more clearly, in order to ſpeak of him more properly, to adore him more religiouſly, and obey him more heartily? I fear, not: For if Matter and Motion can Think, and (as they ſay) the Properties or Attributes of God can be accountable that way, and there be really and truly a Wiſe, Powerful, Juſt and Good God, though Corporeal; why ſhould not theſe Gentlemen look upon themſelves obliged to obey ſuch a God, as well as a Spiritual one? Why do they quarrel with, and caſt off his Holy Word, and reject and deſpiſe his Revealed Will? Is not a Corporeal Deity (according to their Notion) truly a Being endowed with all poſſible Perfections. Is not He the Firſt Cauſe, Maker and Preſerver of all Things? and conſequently is not He as fit and worthy to be worſhipped as well as a Spiritual One? and cannot ſuch a Deity acquaint his Creatures how he will be worſhipped and ſerved? cannot He Reward them for ſo doing, and Puniſh them for offending againſt Him, equally as if He were Incorporeal? If he cannot, indeed, then there is ſomething more than bare Speculation in the caſe, and there muſt be ſome ſubſtantial Reaſon why *Deiſts* and *Antiſcripturiſts* are always Corporealiſts. And this is the truth of the Matter; the God of the Corporealiſts is not the True Deity, whatever they

they may pretend, but a blind, ſtupid, ſenſeleſs Idol, that hath nothing but the Name of God wickedly applied to it. 'Tis only *Nature* or a *Plaſtick Power* in Nature, the whole maſs of, or ſome fine, ſubtile and active Parts of Matter in rapid Motion, without any *Underſtanding*, (a) *Wiſdom*, or *Deſign*, *without liberty of Will* or *freedom of Action*; but Phyſically and Mechanically Neceſſary in all its Operations. Their God is δᾶλον ἀνάγκης, and ἀδυνατὸν ὄντι τὸ πεπρωμένον ἀποφυγέειν καὶ τῷ Θεῷ, as *Herodotus* ſpeaks, he is the *Servant of Neceſſity*, and *cannot poſſibly himſelf avoid the deſtined fate*. And to be ſure, if God be not a free Agent, Nothing elſe can: for all things *flowing from him by an inevitable Neceſſity* (b), or being *Parts of Him*, as *Spinoza* aſſerts, they muſt be under the ſame Neceſſity with the Deity, and he ſaith plainly, That *every thing that is determined to Operate, is ſo determined neceſſarily by God, and could not act at all if God did not thus neceſſarily determine it* (c). *That the Will of Man cannot be called free, but is only a neceſſary Cauſe* (d). And in another place (e) he tells us plainly, *that there are no ſuch things as final Cauſes in Nature, they being only the Ignorant Figments of Mankind; but that all things are Governed by Abſolute Neceſſity*. A while after this, (f) *he aſſerts Man to be a meer Machine*, and ſaith, that *'tis only thoſe who are Ignorant of Cauſes that ſay he was thus finely formed by any Art or Deſign*; or who attribute his *Compoſition to any Supernatural Wiſdom*. And then at laſt he comes to the *great Point* on which all this Philoſophy turns; which is, *That Good and Evil*

(a) *Quando attribuimus Deo ſenſus, Scientiam & Intellectum, quæ in nobis nihil aliud ſunt quàm ſuſcitatus à rebus externis organa prementibus animi Tumultus, non eſt putandum aliquid tale accidere Deo.* *Hobbs* de Civ. c. xv. §. 14. p. 271. The ſame thing he ſaith alſo, *Leviath.* c. 31. p. 190.

(b) *Omnia Inevitabili neceſſitate ex Dei Naturâ ſequi ſtatuo. Op. Poſt.* P. 453. *Vid. etiam*, p. 24. 18. 26, &c.

(c) *Op. Poſt.* p. 24.

(d) P. 28.

(e) P. 36.

(f) P. 37.

are

are not by Nature; but that the Notions of them came only from Mens mistaken Opinion, that all things were made for them; and who therefore call that Good which is agreeable to their Fancy, and that Evil which is contrary to it. By which short Connexion of their Opinions, 'tis clear enough why *Spinoza* was a Corporealist, as also why Mr. *Hobbs* advanced the same Notions. And I doubt those that Espouse the same Opinions now adays, know too well the Consequences of them.

But of the Precariousness of these Notions, I must say no more now; designing particularly to confute them hereafter, as they are made Objections against the Truth, and Obligation of Religion in general.

FINIS.

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